

The Claims Of Jesus #1

Introduction. All throughout the history of the Bible, men have made claims as to who or what they are. Some are able to substantiate these while others cannot. For example, the prophets of Baal could confidently claim that they were stronger than Elijah's God, but they could not substantiate that claim.

Nearer to our own time, Joseph Smith of the Mormons, Charles T. Russell of the Jehovah's Witnesses and Mary Baker Eddy of the Christian Scientists have all made claims which they cannot substantiate and have even been proven so in courts of law.

However, there is one person who has made many claims which have been proven and warrant our investigation today. In the gospel of John, Jesus makes seven claims concerning Himself. In fact, John even states that his purpose for writing his gospel was to demonstrate the power of Jesus' claims (John 20:30-31). In this lesson we will study three of the seven claims of Jesus. What are they and what will be our reaction to them?

I. ***"I Am The Bread Of Life" (John 6:35)***

- A. The people who questioned Jesus had just seen a sign which should have shown that He was the Messiah, but still they desired more signs. They brought up the instance where Moses fed the Israelites with manna from heaven.
- B. The Jews, as it appears from their writings, expected that the Messiah would provide His disciples with plenty of food; and as Moses had provided for the Jews in the wilderness, they supposed that Christ would make provision for the physical needs of His followers.
 1. After partaking of the miraculous provision of bread, the 5,000 Jews were ready to immediately make Jesus their physical king (John 6:15).
 2. Not desiring to be an earthly king, Jesus escaped their presence, only to be found by them again on the next day (John 6:15-25). He rebuked them (vs. 26-27).
- C. Jesus stated that He gave them bread which was adapted to the needs of the soul. They were not to look to Him for their temporal needs, but were to focus on the far better gift which had come down from heaven.
- D. Bread sustains life and Jesus meant something more than physical life by the word "life." Real "life" is the new relationship with God, which is initiated by love, trust and obedience. That relationship is made possible only by Jesus Christ. Without Jesus there may be existence, but not life. Therefore, if Jesus is the essence of life, He may be described as the bread of life.

E. God furnishes for the needs of man through this bread of life. Through obedience, we may have it. But the one thing which defeats God is the defiance of the human heart. Life is there for the taking, or the refusing. When we partake, life enters new satisfaction (Psalm 119:103; 19:10; 1 Peter 2:2-3). The human heart finds what it was searching for and life ceases to be mere existence. If you only "feed on Christ" once a week, you are spiritually starving, malnourished and susceptible to "spiritual disease."

II. **"I Am The Light Of The World" (John 8:12)**

- A. Light is that by which we are able to see objects distinctly. Light means knowledge and knowledge enables us to discern our duty, determine the path of safety and save ourselves from the evils of ignorance and error.
- B. Jesus was the true light of the world. A false light is one that leads to danger or error, while a true light is one that will lead us safely home. The following are some of the accomplishments of light:
 - 1. Light enables people to depart the darkness of sin.
 - 2. Light helps people to walk in the light and to enjoy life.
 - 3. It makes manifest works that are wrought in God.
 - 4. It survives in the darkness and is not overcome by it.
- C. Jesus said that the one who follows Him shall have the light of life.
 - 1. Unlike the light of the sun that shines upon all, the light of Jesus Christ benefits only those who choose to walk in it. Men can love darkness rather than light because of the evil deeds in their lives.
 - 2. To be a follower of Christ is to give oneself body, soul and spirit into the obedience of the Master; and to enter upon that following is to walk in the light.
- D. John 8 discloses the following information about Jesus' claim to be the light of the world in vs. 12:
 - 1. Though He did not depend on His own testimony, Jesus was eminently qualified to give it (vs. 14).
 - 2. It was a supported claim because the Father bore witness to it (vs. 18).
 - 3. He came into this world from heaven (vss. 23-24).
 - 4. The critical relationship of His qualification to those hearing Him appears in His conditioning their salvation from sin upon their belief in Him as divine (vs. 24).
 - 5. He based true discipleship upon abiding in His words (vs. 32).
 - 6. In their arrogance, the Jews refused to become His disciples, claiming they were already free as descendants of Abraham (vs. 33).
 - 7. Jesus then described their true state as bondservants of sin, refusing the word of Jesus and acting as Satan's offspring rather than

Abraham's seed (vss. 34-44).

- E. When we walk alone we are bound to stumble and grope, for so many of life's problems are beyond our solution. When we walk alone we are bound to take the wrong way, because we have no guide to this life. We need heavenly wisdom to walk the earthly way. It is only through Jesus that we can walk in this life and enter into glory (Ephesians 5:17).

III. **"I Am The Door Of The Sheep" (John 10:7)**

- A. When Jesus made this statement, He was talking to self-righteous, self-centered, "blind" religious leaders who regarded themselves as the means of entrance into God's blessings, and as being shepherds of God's people.
- B. In John 10:7-10, Jesus spoke to these people again, and gave an allegorical reply to the conduct of the "blind" Pharisees who had rejected him. Herein he emphasized the relationship between the door and the sheepfold, referring to himself as "the door."
- C. In vs. 8, He referred to the many pretenders who claimed to be shepherds, but who for their own benefit led the people astray (cf. Jeremiah 23:1-4; Ezekiel 34:1-10; Zechariah 11:4-17). Such "shepherds" fed and clothed themselves, but not the flock.
- D. A "door" is a very simple metaphor. It presumes a "within" and a "without" relationship. Those who enter through the "door" (Christ) enjoy a relationship not afforded those on the outside. Christ is the "door" to God; He is the "door" to spiritual freedom; he is the "door" to forgiveness. It is "through Him" that both Jews and Gentiles have "access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Ephesians 2:18).
- E. If Christ is the "door," then all must recognize and respect His authority (cf. Colossians 3:17); all must obey Him to be saved (Hebrews 5:8-9) and all must possess genuine faith in His fitness and His resources as the spiritual provider of the soul.
 - 1. Any religious leader who does not enter by the "door" is a "thief and robber" who comes "to steal, and to kill, and to destroy."
 - 2. Only Jesus, who is the "door," is able to provide abundant life. We must not obey any message except His saving gospel; we must not be members of any church except His church. He is an open "door," ready to receive all who come to God through Him.

Conclusion. We have studied some of what Jesus is in relation to human needs. We can see what He supplies when we examine His claims. In our next lesson, we will consider four more of His claims in the gospel of John. Let us come to Jesus to avail ourselves of the blessings found in Him.